Figs. 14 and 15 have been amended to move the circle which represents cutting roller 152 down to that it is approximately located to the material on the conveyor belt.

Fig. 16 has been amended by adding the term "FIG. 16".

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 13, 15, 18 and 19.

Please amend the Claims as follows:

11. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article, the absorbent article having a removable [and/or replaceable] absorbent core component [without having to remove the absorbent article from the wearer], a first waist region, a second waist region, and a crotch region positioned between [said] the first waist region and [said] the second waist region, the absorbent article further comprising:

a backsheet joined to a fluid pervious topsheet, the backsheet comprising a web; and

an absorbent core disposed between the topsheet and the backsheet, [said] the absorbent core comprising a first absorbent core component disposed in [said] at least the crotch region and at least one removable second absorbent core component removably disposed in the first waist region and in fluid communication with [said] the first absorbent core component [in said first waist region];

[a backsheet joined to said absorbent core said] wherein the backsheet further comprises [a web and] first access means for providing access to [said] the removable second absorbent core component through [said] the backsheet so that [said] the removable second absorbent core component may be removed from the absorbent article through [said] the backsheet without having to remove the absorbent article from a wearer, [said] the first access means comprising a first discontinuity [forming an opening] in [said] the web, [said opening] the first discontinuity being positioned in [said] the first waist region, a first recloseable flap secured over [said opening] the first discontinuity, and a first fastener for recloseably joining the first flap to [said] the backsheet.

12. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein [said] the first absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

14. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim [11] 12, wherein [said] the material for the first absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

Sub F3/C4

17. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein [said] the second absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

Sub F4/C12

20. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim [11] 17, wherein [said] the material for the second absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

21. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein [said] the second absorbent core component exhibits [absorption pressures] a capillary suction specific surface area of [from about 3 to about 15 cm] at least about 0.3 m^2/gram.

22. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim11, wherein [said] the second absorbent core component comprises at least two second absorbent core members [in fluid communication] in a layered relationship, each second absorbent core member being independently removable.

Please add the following new Claims 28-81:

28. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 21, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area of from about 0.7 to about 8 m^2/gram.

C13

29. (New) The Absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area greater than that of the first absorbent core component.

30. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 22, wherein the second absorbent core members are separated by a fluid impervious blocking layer disposed between adjacent second absorbent core members.

31. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 30, wherein the fluid impervious blocking layer is disposed on an outwardly facing surface of and is attached to the second absorbent core member, thereby being removable with the second absorbent core member.

Sub F5

32. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 17, wherein the material for the second absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and absorbent gelling materials.

33. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein the absorbent core further comprises at least one removable third absorbent core component removably disposed in the second waist region and in fluid communication with the first absorbent core component; and
the backsheet further comprises second access means for providing access to the removable third absorbent core component through the backsheet so that the removable third absorbent core component may be removed from the absorbent article through the backsheet without having to remove the absorbent article from the wearer, the second access means comprising a second discontinuity in the web, the second discontinuity being positioned in the second waist region, a second reclosable flap secured over the second discontinuity, and a second fastener for recloseably joining the second flap to the backsheet.

34. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 33, wherein the third absorbent core component comprises at least two third absorbent core members in a layered relationship, each third absorbent core members being independently removable.

35. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 33, wherein the third absorbent core members are separated by a fluid impervious blocking layer disposed between adjacent third absorbent core members.

36. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 35, wherein the fluid impervious blocking layer is disposed on an outwardly facing surface of and is attached to the third absorbent core member, thereby being removable with the third absorbent core member.

37. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 33, wherein the third absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

38. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 37, wherein the material for the third absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

39. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 37, wherein the material for the third absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and absorbent gelling materials.

40. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 33, wherein the third absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area of at least about 0.3 m^2/gram.

41. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 40, wherein the third absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area of from about 0.7 to about 8 m^2/gram.

42. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 33, wherein the third absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area greater than that of the first absorbent core component.

43. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 11 wherein the second absorbent core component can be replaced by a replacement second core component having the same structure as the component which was removed.

44. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 33 wherein the third absorbent core component can be replaced by a replacement third core component having the same structure as the component which was removed.

45. (New) An absorbent article having at least one absorbent core component that is removable without having to remove the absorbent article from a wearer, a first waist region, a second waist region, and a crotch region positioned between the first waist region and the second waist region, the absorbent article comprising:
a fluid pervious topsheet;
a backsheet joined to the topsheet, the backsheet having a first surface, an opposed second surface and a first discontinuity therein, the first discontinuity being positioned in the first waist region and having a first perimeter;
a first absorbent core component disposed in the crotch region between the topsheet and the first surface of the backsheet; and
a back panel envelope comprising a fluid impervious layer, a second core component disposed on the fluid impervious layer, and first joining means for removably joining the back panel envelope to the backsheet, the back panel envelope being removably joined to the second surface of the backsheet in the first waist region and placed such that it overlies the first discontinuity so the second core component is in fluid communication with the first absorbent core component, and the first joining means joins the back panel envelope to the backsheet about the first perimeter.

46. (New) An absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the back panel envelope further comprises a substantially fluid pervious layer joined to the substantially fluid impervious layer at a periphery of the back panel envelope, the substantially fluid pervious layer being positioned between the first absorbent core component and the second absorbent core component when the back panel envelope is joined to the backsheet.

47. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the material for the first absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

48. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the material for the first absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

49. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the first absorbent core component comprises at least two first absorbent core members in fluid communication and in a layered relationship.

50. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the second absorbent core component comprises at least two second absorbent core members in a layered relationship.

51. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the second absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

52. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 51, wherein the material for the second absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

53. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 51, wherein the material for the second absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and absorbent gelling materials.

54. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area of at least about 0.3 m^2/gram.

55. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 54, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area of from about 0.7 to about 8 m^2/gram.

56. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area greater than that of the first absorbent core component.

57. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45, wherein the backsheet further comprises a second discontinuity in the second surface, the second discontinuity being positioned in the second waist region and having a second perimeter; and
the absorbent article further comprises a front panel envelope, the front panel envelope comprising a fluid impervious layer, a third absorbent core component disposed on the fluid impervious layer, and second joining means for removably joining the front panel envelope to the backsheet, the front panel envelope being removably joined to the second surface of the backsheet in the second waist region and placed such that it overlies the discontinuity so the third absorbent core component is in fluid communication with the first absorbent core component and the second joining means joins the front panel envelope to the backsheet about the second perimeter.

58. (New) An absorbent article of Claim 57, wherein the front panel envelope further comprises a substantially fluid pervious layer joined to the substantially fluid impervious layer at a periphery of the front panel envelope, the substantially fluid pervious layer being positioned between the first absorbent core component and the third absorbent core component when the front panel envelope is joined to the backsheet.

59. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 57, wherein the third absorbent core component comprises at least two third absorbent core members in a layered relationship.

60. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 57, wherein the third absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

61. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 60, wherein the material for the third absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

62. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 60, wherein the material for the third absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and absorbent gelling materials.

63. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 57, wherein the third absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area of at least about 0.3 m^2/gram.

64. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 63, wherein the third absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area of from about 0.7 to about 8 m^2/gram.

65. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 57, wherein the third absorbent core component exhibits a capillary suction specific surface area greater than that of the first absorbent core component.

66. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 45 wherein the second absorbent core component can be replaced by a replacement second core component having the same structure as the component which was removed.

67. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 57 wherein the third absorbent core component can be replaced by a replacement third core component having the same structure as the component which was removed.

68. (New) An absorbent article, the absorbent article having a removable absorbent core component that can be removed without having to remove the absorbent article from a wearer, a first waist region, a second waist region, and a crotch region positioned between the first waist region and the second waist region, the absorbent article comprising:
a fluid pervious topsheet;
a backsheet affixed to the topsheet; and
an absorbent core disposed between the topsheet and the backsheet, the absorbent core comprising a first absorbent core component disposed in the crotch region and at least one removable second absorbent core component removably disposed in the first waist region and having a first outer end, the second absorbent core component being in fluid communication with the first absorbent core component;
wherein the topsheet and the backsheet are separably joined at a predetermined portion of the periphery which corresponds to the first outer end, such that the topsheet and the backsheet may be separated for removal of the second absorbent core component.

69. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 68, wherein the first absorbent core component comprises at least two first absorbent core members that are in fluid communication and in a layered relationship.

70. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 68, wherein the second absorbent core component comprises at least two second absorbent core members in a layered relationship, each second absorbent core members being independently removable.

71. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 68, wherein the second absorbent core members are separated by a fluid impervious blocking layer disposed between adjacent second absorbent core members.

72. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 71, wherein the fluid impervious blocking layer is disposed on an outwardly facing surface of and is attached to the second absorbent core member, thereby being removable with the second absorbent core member.

73. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 68, wherein the first absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

74. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 73, wherein the material for the first absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

75. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 68, wherein the second absorbent core component comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibrous nonwoven materials, open-celled polymeric foam materials, absorbent gelling materials, and mixtures thereof.

76. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 75, wherein the material for the second absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and open-celled polymeric foam materials.

77. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 75, wherein the material for the second absorbent core component comprises a mixture of fibrous nonwoven materials and absorbent gelling materials.

78. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 68, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits capillary suction specific surface area of at least about 0.3 m^2/gram.

79. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 78, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits capillary suction specific surface area of from about 0.7 to about 8 m^2/gram.

80. (New) The absorbent article of Claim 68, wherein the second absorbent core component exhibits capillary suction specific surface area greater than that of the first absorbent core component.